

**DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE
1993 MOUNTAINEERING SUMMARY**



The 1993 climbing season was essentially normal compared to the tragic season last year. Weather was better than normal and climbers generally exhibited more caution contributing to the safer season. There was one fatality on Mt. McKinley and 13 other rescue missions within the mountains of the Park. This compares to the 13 fatalities last year (11 on Mt. McKinley and 2 on Mt. Foraker). This season's rescue costs totaled \$70,800 compared to \$206,000 for 1992.

Consideration for new regulations including pre-registration are ongoing. At the present time, all climbers are required to register for Mt. McKinley and Mt. Foraker prior to their expedition.

Four 24-day mountaineering patrols were rotated through the 14,200' Ranger Station from May 1st through the first week in July. The U.S. Army provided its CH-47 Chinook helicopters to establish and extract our mountain facilities. Alaska Air National Guard Rescue personnel assisted our first patrol. They also provided supplies and equipment for the 14,200' camp infrastructure.

The open concession left last year by Genet Expeditions has been filled by Alpine Ascents International. They will be conducting commercial operations on Mt. McKinley beginning in 1994.

STATISTICS:

Number of Climbers on Mt. McKinley:

A record number of 1108 climbers attempted Mt. McKinley with 670 (60%) reaching the summit this season. With a superb weather season on the mountain, surprisingly only 17% attempted routes other than the West Buttress. The West Rib is the second busiest route with 92 climbers compared to 923 on the West Buttress.

Climbers of thirty-one nationalities attempted the mountain. In total, 468 (42%) of the climbers were from outside the United States. The breakdown: USA (639), Germany (68), Switzerland (60), Japan (60), England (58), Canada (42), France (33), Spain (23), Austria (23), Norway (20), Italy (12), Australia (9), New Zealand (9), Czechoslovakia (6), Iceland (6), Korea (6), Netherlands (4), Sweden (4), Chili (3), India (3), Mexico (3), Nepal (3), Slovenia (3), Bulgaria (2), Ireland (2), Poland (2), Belgium (1), Columbia (1), Finland (1), Holland (1), Kazakstan (1).

Rescue:

Eleven of the fifteen climbers (73%) that were rescued by helicopter this year were foreigners. This year, 1.1% of the climbers attempting Mount McKinley this year required rescue.

Medical:

Acute Mountain Sickness: 56 (5%) climbers reported symptoms of AMS. Of these:

- * 44 were mild or moderate symptoms
- * 12 were HAPE or HACE

Frostbite: 19 (2%) climbers reported some degree of frostbite. Of these:

- * 13 were superficial
- * 6 were more severe and involved some degree of tissue loss

New Routes and Notable Ascents:



American climbers Mike Pennings and Jeff Hollenbaugh made an ascent of a new route on Serenity Spire in the Kichatna Spires. Also on Serenity Spire, Americans Doug Byerly and Calvin Hebert ascended a new route.

Mt. Thunder (10,970'), west of Mt Hunter's South Peak, received its first ascent by British climbers Geoff Hornby and David Barlow.

Americans Terry Kennedy and Pat Callis climbed a new route on the SW Face of Kahiltna Peaks East summit.

The most unusual and notable climb of the season was the ascent of the West Buttress route by a blind woman. This remarkable climb was achieved by American Joan Phelps, a 54-year-old mother, who was guided up the mountain by her twin sons, Marty and Michael.

The first ever 'big three summits' in one season was achieved by Americans Greg Collins and Gary Wilmot. They succeeded on the West Buttress of Mt. McKinley, the Southeast Ridge on Mt. Foraker, and the West Ridge of Mt. Hunter.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS: In 1993 the National Park Service conducted thirteen major rescue missions on Mount McKinley and Mount Foraker, resulting in fifteen persons being evacuated by helicopter. There was one fatal accident.

Frostbite; Helicopter Evacuation:

On April 26, David Peel, 31, P.J. Edwards, 27, and James Gallagher, 33, of an eight-member British Army expedition were climbing to the summit of Mount Foraker via the Archangel Ridge. During their ascent they encountered sub-zero temperatures and 55 mph winds, but continued to the summit despite being extremely cold, with Peel and Edwards sustaining moderate cases of frostbite. On April 27, Gallagher sustained minor frostbite while at high camp. The three climbers abandoned their high camps and descended, joining the remaining five expedition members at their basecamp. On April 28, they decided that a rescue was needed, and the five uninjured climbers began a 50-mile trek to Wonder Lake to seek help. On May 3, 1993, Peel, Gallagher, and Edwards made an emergency radio call to a passing military aircraft, requesting a rescue. Late on May 3, the NPS Lama helicopter evacuated the three frostbitten climbers from the Foraker Glacier.



HAPE; Helicopter Evacuation: On May 18, Sgt. Michael Dunn, 31, of a U.S. Navy-Marine expedition became extremely ill with high altitude pulmonary edema at 14,200 feet on the West Buttress route. Dunn ascended at a fast rate, arriving at 14,200 feet on his fourth day on the mountain. Dunn was stabilized at the NPS camp. Due to Dunn's poor condition, the need for a rapid descent, and the risk of a ground evacuation, he was evacuated by the NPS Lama helicopter on May 19.

Acute Dehydration; AMS; Helicopter Evacuation: On May 20, Sgt. Anthony Braithwaite, 29, of the U.S. Navy-Marine expedition collapsed from dehydration, exhaustion, and acute mountain sickness while climbing near Windy Corner at 13,300 feet on the West Buttress route. Braithwaite had been suffering from acute mountain sickness and severe diarrhea for at least the previous 48 hours, but his expedition continued to climb to higher elevations. A Mountain Trip guided expedition encountered Braithwaite shortly after he collapsed, finding him unconscious. They administered emergency medical care, began lowering Braithwaite to a helicopter landing zone, and called for a helicopter rescue. NPS volunteers arrived to assist. The NPS Lama helicopter evacuated Braithwaite from the Windy Corner area to Kahiltna basecamp. An Alaska Air National Guard Pavehawk helicopter transported Braithwaite from basecamp to Anchorage.

Fall With Injuries; Helicopter Evacuation: On May 25, American Don Cook, 62, was descending a steep section of ridge at approximately 16,700 feet on the West Buttress route. Cook and his team were in a weakened state from their summit climb the previous day. They were descending in poor weather, poor visibility, and unstable snow conditions. Cook lost his footing and fell when unstable snow

broke away beneath his feet and he was unable to self arrest. He fell approximately 40 feet and stopped after hitting rocks, sustaining injuries to the chest. Cook was able to descend to the NPS camp at 14,200 feet. Cook was assessed by physicians who suspected rib fractures. Due to pain, the possibility of a further complicating chest injury, and patient age, Cook was evacuated to Kahiltna basecamp by the NPS Lama helicopter and flown by fixed wing airplane from the mountain.

Fatal Fall: On May 30, American Charles Cearly, 40, was descending the Orient Express on the upper West Rib route. He was descending with his partners unroped, and was not using an ice axe, instead using only a ski pole. At approximately 19,200 feet the group stopped, deciding that they should begin climbing roped. As Cearly stopped, he lost his footing and began sliding. He was unable to stop himself without an ice axe, and fell approximately 3,000 feet to his death. Two NPS volunteers reached Cearly's body several hours later. A ranger was inserted into the scene using a helicopter shorthaul and recovered the body. Cearly died from multiple traumatic injuries.

HAPE; HACE; Helicopter Evacuation: On June 7, Austrian mountaineer Eder Ewald, 36, developed severe cases of High Altitude Pulmonary Edema and High Altitude Cerebral Edema while climbing the West Buttress route. Ewald descended to 14,200 feet from 16,200 feet on June 6 after becoming ill with acute mountain sickness, but his condition deteriorated to a life threatening state that night. He received emergency medical care from NPS rangers and volunteers at the NPS 14,200 camp on June 7. A helicopter evacuation was delayed until late in the day due to poor weather.

HAPE; Hypothermia; Helicopter Evacuation: On June 6, Japanese climber Yamashita Sunao, 40, became sick and disoriented while attempting to climb to the summit of Mount McKinley via the West Buttress route. Sunao was able to descend to 14,200 feet with assistance from other climbers and an NPS mountaineering patrol on June 7. Sunao was diagnosed as suffering from High Altitude Pulmonary Edema and hypothermia, and was treated at the NPS camp at 14,200 feet. On June 7, Sunao was evacuated by the NPS Lama helicopter in conjunction with the evacuation of Austrian Eder Ewald.

Frostbite; Helicopter Evacuation: On June 8, a German climber Juliane Manelshajen, 29, developed moderate frostbite on both her feet while attempting to climb to the summit of Mount McKinley on the West Buttress route. Despite being advised to descend and seek care for her injury, Manelshajen stayed at high camp at 17,200 feet while her climbing partners made another summit attempt. On June 10, Manelshajen was examined at the NPS 14,200-foot camp. Due to the extent of frostbite on both feet, and the potential for severe tissue damage if she attempted to descend under her own, Manelshajen was evacuated by the NPS Lama helicopter.

HAPE; Helicopter Evacuation: On June 10, Japanese mountaineer Shojiro Tazawa, 47, became ill with High Altitude Pulmonary Edema while climbing the West Buttress route. Tazawa received medical care at the NPS camp at 14,200 feet and was stabilized. With assistance from NPS volunteers, Tazawa and his expedition members descended to the 11,200-foot camp where they hoped Tazawa would recover. On June 12 Tazawa's condition seriously deteriorated. NPS volunteers returned and found Tazawa to be in a serious life threatening condition, and called for an immediate air evacuation. The NPS Lama helicopter evacuated Tazawa from the 11,200-foot camp.

Medical--Internal Bleeding; Helicopter Evacuation: On June 16, Japanese climber Akira Sakaguchi, 34, was evacuated from 14,200 feet on the West Buttress by the NPS Lama helicopter after he was field diagnosed with a possible life threatening gastrointestinal bleeding.

AMS; Pulmonary Embolism; Helicopter Evacuation: On June 15, Shyam Blon, 32, of Nepal began suffering from acute mountain sickness near the summit of Mount McKinley. Blon and his expedition were able to return to their high camp at 17,200 feet. On June 16, Blon began coughing up blood, and he descended immediately to the NPS camp at 14,200 feet where he was examined by a physician. He was diagnosed with pulmonary embolism, and an immediate air evacuation was requested. Blon was evacuated by the NPS Lama helicopter.

Avalanche; Multiple Injuries; Helicopter Evacuation: On June 16, Mexican Bertha Ramirez, 41, was hit by an avalanche while climbing in the lower couloir on the West Rib route on Mount McKinley. Ramirez was swept 100 feet to the bottom of the couloir and partially buried. Although unresponsive when dug out by her partners, they were able to revive her. Ramirez suffered from facial and upper extremity injuries. The team was able to contact an aircraft in the area, which notified the NPS Lama helicopter as it was en route to 14,200 feet to evacuate another climber (Blon). The Lama was able to land near the base of the couloir and evacuate Ramirez in conjunction with the other rescue in progress.

HACE; Rescue; Helicopter Evacuation: On June 27, Czech climber Lubomir Tesar, 33, was rescued from 17,200 feet on the West Buttress route. Tesar and his three climbing partners rapidly ascended to the 17,200-foot high camp in only six days where Tesar contracted High Altitude Pulmonary and Cerebral Edema. Tesar was lowered in a litter down the Rescue Gully by mountain guides from Mountain Trip, Tesar's partners, NPS volunteers, and a park ranger. Attempts to stabilize Tesar were undertaken for 16 hours at the NPS camp at 14,200 feet. Significant improvement was not shown so Tesar was air evacuated by the NPS Lama helicopter on June 28.

There were a number of other injuries, medical problems, and altitude related problems this season. Thirty-eight climbers were treated at the NPS first-aid/rescue camp at 14,200 feet on the West

Buttress and the climbers were able to descend on their own without assistance from the Park Service. In other cases climbers were able to perform their own self-rescues without NPS assistance.

Unauthorized Mountain Guides: Several unauthorized guides conducted illegal commercial activities on Mount McKinley this year. This is prohibited by the Code of Federal Regulations. The National Park Service investigated all suspected unauthorized guides. Two unauthorized guides were cited and convicted in Federal Magistrate's Court with fines totalling over \$9100. These illegal trips seriously compromised client safety. One client became seriously ill with life threatening HAPE and HACE and would have died had he not been rescued by the Park's helicopter. Another guide abandoned two clients and allowed them to wander around unroped in extremely hazardous terrain. They also suffered from frostbite.

There are seven companies that hold concession permits to guide on Mount McKinley and Mount Foraker. Prospective clients should be certain that they are employing one of the authorized concessionaires. Illegally guided trips could be denied access to the park. All suspected illegal guides will be investigated and law enforcement action may be taken.

Sanitation: With increasing use by climbers, it is more important than ever for mountaineers to properly dispose of human feces and urine. Many camps, especially at higher elevations, are littered with feces and frozen urine spots that are not covered with the annual accumulation of snow. Not only is this an environmental degradation of the mountain, but there is risk of contamination of snow that might be melted and used as drinking water by future expeditions. We are still suggesting the use of plastic bags for latrines, which should be disposed of in a deep crevasse. The Park Service maintains pit latrines dug deeply into the snowpack at base camp on the Kahiltna Glacier, 14,300 feet on the West Buttress, and at the landing area in the Ruth Amphitheater. Additionally, we have recently experimented with the removal of human waste in barrels by helicopter. We are also planning for the use of an experimental latrine at high camp at 17,200 feet on the West Buttress.

Trash: Most expeditions are hauling their trash to base camp where it is flown off the mountain. Still others continue to dump their trash in crevasses. Trash accumulation on other popular mountains of the world continues to receive considerable publicity. Trash dumps and appalling sanitation conditions at the more popular campsites in the Himalayas, Europe, South America and elsewhere threaten human health, degrade the mountaineering experience, threaten the mountain environment, and can threaten climbers' freedom of access to some mountain areas. Mountaineers of all nationalities must take the responsibility for, and the initiative in, preserving the quality of the world's mountain environments.

A combination of education, leading by example, and peer pressure are probably the most effective tools that can be brought to bear against less considerate mountaineers.

Citations were issued for littering, abandoning food and equipment caches, and improper disposal of human body waste in 1993.

Administrative notes for 1993:

- * The South District staff consisted of:

South District Ranger:	J.D. Swed
Mountaineering Rangers:	Daryl Miller Kevin Moore Jim Phillips Roger Robinson
Administrative Clerk:	Kathy Sullivan
Student Conservation Aid:	Mike Loso
Helicopter Manager:	Dave Kreutzer
Helicopter Pilot:	Bill Ramsey, Jim Hood
Helicopter Mechanic:	Scott Kimball

- * The Volunteer Program used to staff McKinley Patrols is crucial to the safety of climbers. These people unselfishly gave up their time and energy to assist mountaineers and save lives. The National Park Service would like to thank VIPs.

Volunteers in the Park (VIP) on Denali patrols:

Gary Sapp	John Roskelley
Mark Wilford	Jeff Maus
Steve Gorman	Paul Reddington
Colin Grissom	Dalton Maples
Mike Welch	Vince Langman
Keith Nicholson	Allan Ellsworth
Rupert Wedgewood	Andrew Laurence

- * A special thanks to McKinley guides that assisted with rescues.

To request mountaineering information and/or registration forms, please contact the Talkeetna Ranger Station, P.O. Box 588, Talkeetna, Alaska 99676. Telephone: 907-733-2231.
FAX: 907-733-1465.

J.D. Swed
South District Ranger

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MOUNTAIN/ROUTE	EXPEDITION	CLIMBERS	SUMMIT
West Buttress	241	920	561
West Rib	30	92	51
Cassin Ridge	8	20	15
Muldrow Glacier	3	23	4
Muldrow Gl. Traverse	2	8	6
W. Buttress Traverse	8	39	29
South Buttress	0	0	0
N.W. Buttress	0	0	0
South Face	0	0	0
Rdg of No Return	1	4	4
East Buttress	1	2	0
TOTAL MCKINLEY	293	1108	670
Mt. Foraker	8	20	6
* Mt. Hunter	21	55	19
* Mt. Huntington	2	4	2
* Mooses Tooth	3	8	4
* Other Mtns.	58	200	unknown

* These records represent the number of climbers who registered to climb in these areas. Since registration is required only on Mount Foraker and Mount McKinley, it is likely that other ascents occurred that are not included in these statistics.